

## **School Fees**

Like traditional public schools, charter schools may require parents and students to bear the costs of many expenses that are considered beyond the ordinary costs of education. Fees may be charged for conveniences such as lockers, towels, yearbooks, clubs, travel, extracurricular activities, or materials and supplies needed for specific courses. Rental fees may be assessed for items such as textbooks, musical instruments, and calculators. Fees may also include items required by the school, such as uniforms, but not provided to all students by the school. Refundable deposits may be charged to ensure the return or replacement of loaned tangible items. Charges related to the National School Lunch Program are not considered fees.

Fees must be set, approved, and published each school year by the charter school Board of Directors. The fee schedule must be posted and distributed to all parents or guardians annually.

Schools may not require that K-6 students provide their own supplies; the school must provide all supplies that are needed in the regular classroom, although elementary students may be charged for lost or damaged supplies. Textbook fees or other board-approved fees may only be charged to students in grades 7-12.

To ensure the participation of all students, fees must be waived for eligible students for any class, program, or activity provided, sponsored, or supported by the charter school. Fees must be waived for the following students:

- Students eligible for free school lunch.
- Students who are in state custody or foster care.
- Students whose families are receiving public assistance through the Family Employment Program (FEP) from the Utah Department of Workforce Services.
- Students who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Students whose families are financially unable to pay because of exceptional financial burdens beyond the family's control; these determinations are made on a case-by-case by school administrators.

Schools may request documentation from parents to verify fee waiver eligibility. Early college class fees need not be waived because they are post secondary expenses.

The process of applying for fee waivers must be handled confidentially and without discrimination. Only school staff with a need and right to know should be aware of student fee waiver status. Student aides should never assist in the fee waiver process.

A charter school board may establish policies for partial fee waivers or other alternatives for students unable to pay their entire fees. Students may perform a work assignment or public service as payment-in-kind in lieu of a fee. The work must be a fair exchange of time for the value of the fees waived. Work programs must be appropriate

to the age and ability of the student. They must not be demeaning or discriminatory. Fee-waiver eligible students are not required to perform work in lieu of fees.

Donation requests are permissible to pay for activities if it is clear that donations are voluntary. Students may not be excluded from activities because they did not make a donation.

Students with unpaid fees or fines cannot be denied a diploma, official transcript, or credit for coursework completed, nor can their student files be withheld from a subsequent school attended by a student.

A helpful FAQ paper developed by the staff of the Government and Legislative Relations Section at the Utah State Office of Education is available at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/LAW/Papers%20of%20Interest.htm>.

Some examples of fees currently charged at public secondary schools in Utah:

Activity Fee.....	\$30.00
Textbook Rental.....	35.00
Refundable Deposit.....	15.00
Locker & Library Fees.....	2.00
Computer Lab Fee.....	15.00
Driver's Education.....	45.00
Music Instrument Rental Fee.....	70.00
Graphing Calculator Rental Fee.....	20.00
Science Lab.....	10.00
Shop Lab.....	15.00
Extracurricular Sports.....	45.00
Cheerleader Uniforms.....	400.00
Club Dues.....	20.00
Class Change Fee.....	5.00
Library Fine (per day).....	.05
Parking Ticket.....	5.00